



ISSUE

23.50

December 12, 2021

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McNear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Church Contribution: the Biblical Pattern

By Kyle Pope

In many churches any time a congregation comes together a collection is taken from the members (and even visitors). Often great effort and motivation are used to persuade those who are present to give generously. While the Bible clearly teaches that the New Testament church collected money to address the needs of each congregation, does the Bible teach taking up such collections at any (and every) time there is an assembly?

I. The New Testament Church Gave on Sunday. When the apostle Paul wrote to the church in ancient Corinth, he gave them instruction regarding how and when to take up a collection for a need that the church should address. He wrote, **“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”** (1 Cor. 16:2, NKJV). Although the occasion for this instruction involved a gift that would be sent to Jerusalem, his instruction was not isolated to Corinth alone. In the previous verse he wrote, **“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also”** (1 Cor. 16:1). While individual giving should happen as the opportunity arises (see Gal. 6:10), this is the only example we have of when the church collection was made.

II. Giving Is to Be a Personal Matter, As Each Person Decides within His Heart. In Paul’s second letter to Corinth, he returns again to this subject. While Paul clearly seeks to encourage generosity, he tempers it with a powerful qualifier. He says, **“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver”** (2 Cor. 9:7). We may note three points here. Giving is to occur:

1. “As he purposes in his heart.” Just as the words of Jesus declared, **“But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing”** (Matt. 6:3). The public spectacle of a preacher manipulating an audience, and then focusing attention upon a large contribution is the exact opposite of what the Lord taught in Matthew 6:3 and through the apostle Paul.

2. “Not grudgingly or of necessity.” While a preacher or the elders are doing just what Paul did if they teach the principles of giving, any pressure or compulsion should come only from a person’s reflection upon his or her worship of God. A Christian’s giving must not come from “guilt-trips” or “mind-games.” Instead:

3. “God loves a cheerful giver.” When a worshipper leaves an assembly feeling as if he or she has been pressured and manipulated into giving, God is not pleased with the gift. In such an instance, not only has the one who resents being pressured failed to worship in truth but the preacher or church leader responsible for that atmosphere stands accountable before God for violating the clear teaching of Scripture. Instead, we should search our hearts, make delib-

erate plans about what we would like to give, and do it with joy. Of this attitude the Hebrew writer tells us, **“with such sacrifices God is well pleased”** (Heb. 13:16). This is the Biblical pattern, and the one which Christians must follow today.

Some Questions about the Collection?

By Kyle Pope

It is not uncommon for questions to arise from time to time regarding the **“collection for the saints”** (1 Cor. 16:1). Is it authorized? Should the church deposit money collected in an interest bearing account? Is it right for a church to allow a large amount of money to build-up? If interest accumulates on a large amount could it be used to support preaching of the gospel? There are a number of things to consider in answering these questions:

1. Is it scriptural for a church to save money? The instructions in 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 show us not only that the church is commanded to **“lay something aside”** (i.e. take up a collection) on the first day of the week, but it also tells us some things about the specific need Paul was addressing that can help answer this question. He was taking a **“gift”** to the saints in Jerusalem (16:3). This was probably of the same nature as that mentioned in Romans 15:26-27—a contribution to the needy saints. Whatever its nature, it is clear that the brethren were to make such collections **“that there be no collections when”** Paul came to them (16:2). This clearly shows that the church was authorized to save the contribution collected for some period of time until its use. No time was set, but authorization was given to save the collection for a time until its authorized use. If Corinth was authorized to do this, churches today who follow this example are acting within the authority of Scripture.

2. Can the church draw interest on money collected? The issue here has to do with how the New Testament has authorized money to be raised for works of the church. The only means by which the church is authorized to raise money for its work is through the voluntary contribution made by the saints (1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 9:6-7). The church is not authorized to have a bake sale, a car wash, a raffle, or to do business in order to generate money to carry out its work. Human beings can be very creative in generating ways to make money, but if we are following scriptural patterns, we will limit ourselves to the collection as the sole source of raising money for the church.

If money has been raised through the collection “**on the first day of the week**” (1 Cor. 16:2), does interest drawn on this money constitute another way of raising money? Through the years, brethren have reached different conclusions on this. Some feel conscientiously that to draw interest off of the collection would be generating money through a means other than the voluntary contribution. Others feel that it would demonstrate good stewardship of money that has been collected through the voluntary contribution to hold it in an account that yields some small amount of interest. In the parables of the Talents and the Minas, the lazy servant was rebuked for not even drawing interest on the money placed under his stewardship (cf. Matt. 25:27; Luke 19:23). Since these parables were given before the church was established and do not address the church contribution directly, general principles of good stewardship are the only things that might have application to this question. Given that the Bible has given no explicit instructions regarding the treatment of the collection from the time it is taken up until the time it is scripturally used, it is a matter of the judgment of the elders of a local church how to keep any monies saved. Some will choose to do so, others will not, and some will choose not to in order to avoid any offense to members who might have reservations about this practice.

If a church has saved up the collection for a period of time, two additional questions might arise:

1. Can a church save amounts as large as \$100,000.00?

First, we must recognize that what is considered a large amount in proportion to a church’s weekly contribution differs depending upon the size of a congregation. A small congregation might consider \$100,000.00 a very large amount and argue that holding back that much money without using it could indicate that the congregation is not using the Lord’s money to spread the gospel or help saints in need. On the other hand, for a larger congregation this amount would not be as large in proportion to their contribution and various financial commitments they may have made. While the size of church’s contribution has nothing to do with its value before the Lord, it has a great deal to do with what saints in a particular local work are able to accomplish. The obligations one congregation makes will differ depending on its size and ability. A congregation might have preachers it supports

(locally and in other places)—how can they keep their commitments to maintain this support? A congregation that builds a building will have facilities to maintain, utility costs to pay, or even zoning ordinances that require money to be kept on hand. I once knew of a congregation whose meeting house was built in an area in which the city demanded that it keep tens of thousands of dollars in reserve should the city decide to pave a road that lay adjacent to its property. In order for the saints to even build and meet there this condition had to be honored. Now, they could have chosen to build elsewhere, but to spread the gospel in that area they had to conform to the demands the local government imposed upon them (cf. Rom. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-16). Keeping money on hand to fulfill these kinds of responsibilities does not reflect poor stewardship, but responsible preparation to keep commitments faithful Christians have made to fulfill the Lord’s work.

If, however, a congregation simply refuses to use money that has been set aside for the Lord’s work out of greed, pride, or excessive worry about the future that isn’t right. The collection is only authorized in order to carry out works the church is expected to do. Failure to use the Lord’s money for the Lord’s work is unfaithful stewardship of these



funds. Given that the Bible offers no explicit instructions regarding the percentage of the collection that may be held in reserve until it is scripturally used, it is also a matter of the judgment of the elders of a local church regarding how much to save and when to use these funds.

2. Can a church support preaching of the gospel from interest drawn on a large amount saved? We noted above that some brethren consider interest drawn on the collection an unauthorized means of generating

money into the collection while others see it as good stewardship of the money drawn through the voluntary collection. While this issue might be a matter of conscience and judgment, we can clearly see from Scripture that it is authorized to use the collection for the scriptural work of support of preaching (1 Cor. 9:14; Phil. 4:15). The New Testament never refers to the collection as the *Lord's money*, but the inference is made that the contribution is dedicated unto His purposes. In 2 Corinthians

9:7 Paul said that **"God loves a cheerful giver"** going on to say in the next verse that, **"God is able to make all grace abound toward you"** (9:8). Paul told the Philippians that the support they had given to him was **"a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God"** (Phil. 4:18). This shows that the use of the collection is offered to God in the sense that it fulfills God's work. It is, therefore, the Lord's money and therefore appropriate for us to use it as in accordance with biblical authority. Support of preaching is an authorized work of the local church, so money that is a part of the **"collection for the saints"** (1 Cor. 16:1) may be used for this work. The elderships within different local congregations will make judgments on the issue of interest-bearing accounts in keeping with their conscience and the conscience of their membership, but there is no question regarding the scriptural authority for the support of preaching from the collection.



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